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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN CENTRES IN THE EAST

by

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN CENTRES IN THE EAST

by Dr. J.H.A. Logemann

The first thing to be said in this attempt to deal with the problem of urbanization within the limits set is that the matter is so varied and complicated, that it does not bear generalization - the very thing however I am compelled to do when trying to cover the subject within one lecture. Moreover, even at the cost of undue generalization it seems impossible to attain anything like completeness. Urban life and the adjustment of man to its exigencies show too many aspects, geographically and substantially, to allow a thumbnail sketch to be drawn. After apologizing for both generalization and incompleteness again I have to confess the difficulty properly to define my subject. The existence of cities is mentioned all along history in many civilizations but it seems clear that, regarding their social structure, the royal residence, the local market-place and even the ancient port town do not show the characteristics of a modern urban society. The study of their character and evolution deserves full attention but this lies outside the scope of the present paper.

What I have in mind may be loosely defined as the type of urbanization which is characteristic for the development of capitalist activities amidst precapitalist surroundings, as soon as the former attain a certain degree of intensity.

Precapitalism may - for my purposes - equally loosely be defined as the type of society, wherein the bulk of the population is organized in communal villages or in clans, mainly on the basis of a subsistence economy - whether or not supporting a feudal superstructure - both of them leaving but a limited space for trade and handicraft along traditional lines, and in which society have developed a philosophy of life and patterns of social intercourse in close harmony with these static conditions.

Capitalism means then in this context an economy of marketing, profits and wages, of commercialism and industrialism, involving an individual attitude and a philosophy of life and pattern of social intercourse fitted to its restless dynamism.

The expansion of capitalist enterprise, the invasion of its inherent ways of thought and behaviour and its social institutions in precapitalist countries may have had a long-drawn prelude in previous centuries - and it has - but as a matter of fact it has generally and strongly intensified all over the world since the first World War and the boom period of the twenties. As a consequence, in this period a so called dualist or pluralist economic structure has been, if not created, then at least expanding in large areas. Its social and cultural implications became clearly apparent, and do not cease to puzzle national and colonial governments and international agencies alike. The contrast between the capitalist and the precapitalist sphere appears markedly in the contrast between the rural village and the modern city as a centre of commercialism, industrialism and modern government administration, and it may be held that the latter type, even in countries where cities in general were a well known phenomenon, only came into existence as a consequence of the intensified impact of capitalism. Therefore in many countries the turn of the century marks a conspicuous growth of cities, especially of the larger and the very large.

This type of city functions in first instance as a mighty source of money income, whereas money in the villages is scarce but increasingly wanted to meet new needs and obligations, e.g. money debts and taxes. Hence a mighty ebb and flood of labour to and from the city, leaving an increasing number of permanent residents. People living in the cities are dependent on wages and profits, that is, on employers and customers instead of on the produce of their own land and on mutual aid. People have to seek a precarious place in society instead of holding a fixed place in the community. Consequently they have to adapt themselves to a totally new pattern of social behaviour. It requires them to develop an individualist attitude, strongly contrasting with rural community life, in economics and morals. There is more social insecurity but also more freedom, as compared to the support and to the fetters of the clan and the village. People of greatly varying provenience are thrown together; customary law and morals cannot be observed in such a modern Babylon, whereas customary authorities are bound to drop out. People leave settled conditions of one type to live in unsettled conditions of quite another type. No wonder they are conspicuous for their lack of adjustment to the new environment.

These main features, the specification of which could be multiplied, and will be further on, should make clear the essential difference from any other type of city in precapitalist areas. In this connection I will cite De Kat Angelino, who, in his "Colonial Policy", states that oriental cities largely conserved the mentality of the village community in their units of the family, the street, the ward or the guild. Indeed many of them were little more than agglomerations of rural villages. If they centred around a royal court the relations to the feudal chief replaced those to the head of the clan or of the village, but equally encompassed the whole life of these royal retainers. Probably the commercial centre may have been most akin to the modern city, but even then we should investigate the organization of trade and handicraft before passing judgment.

I will now first give some figures, illustrative of the recent and rapid growth of cities. Population numbers in Djakarta rose from 150.000 in 1900 to nearly 550.000 in 1930, and perhaps 670.000 in 1940. Johannesburg numbered less than 16.000 in 1904, as against 520.000 in 1936. The African population of Leopoldville rose from 16.700 in 1923 to 46.900 in 1940. Dakar numbered 30.000 in 1926, thrice as much in 1936, and had doubled again in 1946. Indeed the movement seems to have accelerated during and after the second World War. If Djakarta is now estimated to harbour perhaps some 2.000.000 souls this should be attributed at least partly to the extraordinary circumstances of war and revolution, but this cannot hold good for the cited example of Dakar, and still less for Leopoldville, which numbered 110.500 in 1946 and by now is estimated to have reached 200.000*. I may point out that I could have given similar figures about other places and areas; the movement, indeed, is general.

Next it can be stated that the growth of the larger and largest cities is most prolific, as far as the scarce figures at my disposal seem to point out. In Java cities above 100.000 souls comprised 2,83% of the total population in 1920, and 3,75% in 1930, the cities numbering from 25,000 up to

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*The same alarming flood in India and Pakistan. From 1911-1921 the total population is reported to have risen by 0,8% only; urban population by 9,1%. From 1931-1941 total population rose by 15% but the urban population by 40%.

100.000 grew at a slower rate; the smaller cities even had lost proportionally. Pfeil reports of India that the population of cities larger than 100.000 souls increased by 24,3% between 1901 and 1921, and by 46,5% between 1901 and 1931. All others showed slighter increases, except those between 20.000 and 50.000 in the period 1921-1931. In Japan cities below 40.000 in 1925 comprised a smaller percentage of the total population than in 1920; the larger cities had relatively increased most of all those exceeding the 100.000 mark.

The stormy rise in population numbers is not due to an abnormal excess of births over death rates. Conditions of housing and health as a rule are found to be far below normal; accordingly mortality, expecially infant mortality, runs high. On the other hand natality may be kept down by the often abnormal constitution of urban populations, which will be discussed later on.

It is clear then, that the development under survey is caused by immigration, or more exactly by the excess of immigration over emigration, as will appear later on. It might seem obvious that trade and industry - the fact of western activity - naturally attracts labour, but then one should not overlook the fact that it requires some explanation why a precapitalist community should be willing to supply labour. Thus, we should ask whether there is any reason why the agricultural subsistence economy should export labour.

In this respect a first important fact to note is, that we see the same incessant flow to the city in countries where the density of population in their rural districts is very low, as there is in countries where it is very high. In some Asiatic regions the population density of purely agricultural districts attains the same height as occurs in the heavily industrialized areas of Europe. About 1930, industrialized Holland counted 231 souls per square kilometer; agricultural Java showed up 316. It seems natural then, that the corresponding low standard of living entices people to seek their fortunes elsewhere. However, the same movement is seen in the Union of South Africa, where a much lower rate of population density obtains, but here one could object, that the land reserved for the Bantu population proves unable to support them. But then in the third place I want to mention the Belgian Congo, where an extremely sparse rural population (4,55 per square km) is being so heavily drained by the drift to the city and to industry, that the agricultural economy of the village is seriously endangered. The same complaint comes to us from a scarcely industrialized territory like Senegal. Fifty years ago 2 to 3% of the population was living in the city. By now it is 20%. "La brousse se vide": the countryside runs empty.

Therefore it would seem on first sight, judging by these figures, that overpopulation cannot be the main motive for the drift to the city. Nevertheless it is. Be it the excessive growth of the population or the rapidly advancing deterioration of the soil, or again the undue restrictions of native reserves, everywhere the fact arises that native agricultural production grows inadequate to provide a living for those dependent on it.

Yet there is another main cause, deriving from the impact of western economy on native life.

We may find it in the increasing need of money which is pervading primitive rural society. Money is wanted for buying the variety of industrial articles which formerly were unknown, and money is wanted for paying taxes.

Modern administration is possible only on a basis of a money economy, but moreover in several areas money taxes have been introduced purposely for stimulating the primitive population to change over to marketing economy and become willing to enter into the labour market.

Initially people in search for the scarce economic commodity which money is to them, have no intention of giving up their rural way of life and becoming a permanent urban resident. In Indonesian cities, all of them surrounded by a teeming countryside, an everyday stream in and out may be observed, making use of train, cart, bicycle, or walking. Migration from more remote districts is largely seasonal, the periods of ploughing, planting and harvesting calling people back to the village. Statistics collected in South Africa point out that most people hold a job in the city for a few months only, and periodically go back to their kraals. This floating urban population of largely unskilled labour, earning very low wages, constitutes, by the way, a main problem as to living and housing conditions, and indeed often is found in extremely miserable circumstances, sleeping in the open air, in railway-vans or other temporary shelters.

Of course there are other causes also for the trend to the cities, but they are of minor importance, at least as regards numbers. There is the lure of the amenities of city life, the appearance of luxury, the entirely new things to be seen and experienced, but the investigations of Miss Hellman in Johannesburg, for instance, seem to point out that the quantitative influence of this factor is small. The same probably holds good for the tendency to get rid of the fetters of clan- and village-life. Further an important though relatively not numerous section is made out by children visiting schools, and another by those holding jobs which require western education. But all these latter groups cannot account quantitatively for the problem which the rapid urbanization really presents, although they are giving it a specific and important hue on which I will have to dwell later on.

The economically and socially dualistic character of the type of city I am analysing, as a centre of commerce, industry and government administration, implies the presence of a relatively large community living according to western standards, in many cases aliens. This makes a certain amount of domestic jobs available, which attract women. But this does not as a rule lead to a relatively high percentage of females, except perhaps in those cases where abundant use is made of women in industry. The striking feature rather seems to be a very high masculinity rate, i.e. a large surplus of (young)men, just because residence in town is intended to be temporary, and people initially do not bring their families with them. Such at least is the situation in India and in several territories in Africa, where many urban settlements have grown out of mining centres, especially so when neither the employers nor the government wanted to encourage the springing up of a resident urban population. Children and old people too are relatively scarce. It must be said therefore, that the demographic structure in many of these cities is, or has been until recently, abnormal to a high degree. In some cases government policy, while attempting - though rather unsuccessfully - to adjust the numbers of the native urban population to the demand for industrial labour, has substantially contributed to this abnormality, people being liable to expulsion when they get unemployed, and consequently hesitating to call in their families.

Nevertheless circumstances in the long run could not fail to result in generating a resident urban population, partly deriving from immigration of complete families, partly from a second generation born and reared in town.

Thus the demographic structure of African cities is slowly normalizing. In those countries where the growth of cities, though showing up in principle the same characteristics, has proceeded along a more gradual course, neither being hampered by government measures nor strongly influenced by large industrial enterprises, attracting preferably young men or young women, the demographic structure seems to differ only slightly from that in the rural district.

Whereas urban development of the type under survey is rather young, it is not to be wondered at that even the permanent residents maintain close relations with their village or clan of origin. The importance of this fact may vary. E.g. the large port of Surabaya in Java, is still purely Javanese, and whereas the Javanese people are not organized in clans and follow the creed of Islam, people can continue living in town in all essentials according to the standards of religion and custom they were born into. But a city like Johannesburg is a modern Babylon; because there a man lives isolated from his clan, it presents to him a religious and customary vacuum, and then it is of eminent importance that from time to time people can fall back on their old surroundings for the essentials of social life, e.g. marriage.

On the other hand the rural provenience of a large part of the urban masses has its economic implications. They may briefly be summed up as follows. As long as the ties with the original village or clan subsist, the city resident can fall back on them as long as there is food in the village, and conversely the villager can rely on the city resident as long as there is money in the city. During the big slump of the thirties population numbers in many cities fell; the ebb stream turned to the village. In this way a precapitalist system of social security remains interlocked with the adventure of urban life; not however without seriously hampering the city resident in adapting himself to his new social status, which in principle requires him to bear social responsibility for his family only, and to bear it alone.

The rise of modern cities in formerly predominantly agricultural countries has surprised governments not only by its rapidity but also by the perfect novelty of the problems involved. There is for this reason a dangerous lag in the realization of those special measures required for the material and moral wellbeing of urban populations in far the most countries concerned. The primary problem appears to be housing, as inadequate housing lies at the root of so many deficiencies. Complaints about overcrowding of cities could be heard in all countries concerned already before the last war, but the present situation has almost catastrophically deteriorated by the fact that building during and after the war for a long time was at a standstill, whereas the influx into the cities in many cases went on at an increased rate, as we saw before. True, that in some countries the unsafety prevailing in the rural districts as the aftermath of war and revolution caused a temporary flood, which is likely to ebb away again. Nevertheless, another phenomenon originating from the same source, i.e. the drifting away of large numbers of young people from rural occupations and traditions, probably will prove to exert a permanent influence, and not a very favourable one at that.

It is said that the number of houses at Djakarta ought to be more than doubled, if the average number of occupants per house is to be brought down to the scarcely acceptable figure of 6,5*. In India, according to some

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*Clason, "Ontstaan en groei van Kebajoran", De Ingenieur in Indonesië, Juni 1950.

observers, the housing problem has grown nearly untractable*. Conditions in many places in Africa are little less ominous; in Leopoldville in January 1951 the average occupancy per plot was estimated to be 12, whereas 4 would be normal.

Building for the needs of the lower classes is nowhere in the world a very profitable affair, least of all in the countries here concerned. Government housing schemes often cannot give more than a drop into the bucket. They are imposing a heavy stress on the budget as - since the last war more than ever - it is utterly impossible to construct healthy houses at an economic rent. The main burden in many cases is simply left to the people themselves. They are accustomed to build their rural types of houses, but in the city they lack the proper materials as well as the traditional mutual aid; so what is produced often is in the way of shacks and shanties. Few only are able to pay for a house, erected by a building contractor.

As a consequence building in native wards often is left in practice, if not legally, uncontrolled. The effect is overbuilding of a surface already poorly provided with sanitary and traffic equipment. Control, however, if not supplemented by an adequate building activity, means overcrowding of the dwellings. As long as the housing problem is not solved the effect in the end is rather the same, but that the control is felt by the people as an unfair handicap.

Rural domestic life, especially in tropical countries, is largely lived in the open, and this makes good, in a way, the usual total lack of sanitary provisions. In the city, however, outdoor housekeeping on the overbuilt and overcrowded premises becomes a source of pollution of the soil and of contagious diseases. Again, the rural habits of life of the newly urbanized masses seem to preclude a solution of the housing problem by building multistoreyed houses.

To the well organized activities of capitalism, precapitalist society has, in the cities, little to contribute but a large supply of unskilled labour. It is in the city, therefore, that the wide gap yawning between wealth and poverty is almost brutally exhibited in the way the living quarters of the rich and the poor are in contrast. In Leopoldville there are 1.300 whites per square kilometer, as against 15.000 Africans. The fact that in highly built up Brussels the density is 6.500 people per km^2 may give you some impression of the congestion indicated by the second figure.

Both the abnormal demographic structure of the urban population and the miserable housing conditions are main reasons for the most ominous fact of urban life, i.e. the deterioration of the family. A further reason is to be found in the extremely low wages earned by the majority of unskilled labour. Literature on urban conditions in South Africa and the Congo abounds in statements that the average wages are far below the minimum essential for a healthy family life, and it seems highly improbable - a few exceptions granted - that general conditions are better elsewhere. That is why women are compelled to contribute to the family income by seeking outdoor work. In South Africa illegal beer brewing appears to be one of the main sources of additional income. The matter is connected with special national policy, which as a

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*At least one should fear that the policy of "conservative surgery" and of re-awakening the sense of proud citizenship, which Sir Patrick Geddes was probably right to advocate about 1920, by now would prove to be wholly inadequate.

rule I leave out of my picture, but it deserves attention as one major example of how the lack of adjustment between the mentality of the immigrants and the requirements of urban society may eventually result in the additional evil of turning a whole social class into habitual delinquents.

The interrelation of poverty, mendicancy and crime is too well known to require a broad exposition within our context. But it should be realized, that in the background of this interrelation we find the fact, that in the city the individual is thrown - economically and morally - upon his own resources. Poverty in the communal rural society is much less liable to lapse into serious criminality, and when it does, it takes on peculiar shapes of its own, e.g. dacoity.

Prostitution, practised by single and by married women, as well as irregular marital unions are closely bound up with poverty on the one hand and the absence of the control of tribal public opinion on the other. Both are regular features of urban life in general, but of course extraordinarily frequent where a high masculinity ratio occurs. It is reported of Brazzaville that 60% of all lawsuits relate to sexual affairs.

It should be stated, however, that prevalence of all these moral evils does vary widely, dependent on the rate of "abnormality" of urban conditions as compared with the traditional ways of life.

A closely related aspect of the urban problem is the position of the children. Under rural conditions even young children soon find their specific tasks in domestic work and next in religious community life. In many areas organizations of male and female youth play their part in it. By this practice, and sometimes by means of special educational provisions, they grow into the observance of the social and moral standards of their environment. In the city this organic place within an encompassing whole is lost to them. The poky family home does not afford them a proper place to play. There is little or no work for them to do, especially as regards the boys. The father, and often the mother too, are absent during daytime. What else can they find for their young energies but guttersniping and worse? At night they are occasionally the involuntary but attentive witnesses of licence. Perhaps they can get a bit of religious education and they could visit a school, as a rule for a few years only, either because nothing more is provided for or because no more can be afforded. In far the majority of cases the school does not fill the gap between infancy and adult age, nor even unto the early age at which they have to take to regular work for wages.

Of course generalization here is as dangerous as anywhere. Again there is the closest connection between poverty, the rate of abnormality of urban family life and the extent of juvenile depravity. But the fact cannot be denied that practically everywhere juvenile delinquency and prostitution do play an ominous part and that conditions are most unfavourable to prepare the urban born and urban reared youth for future citizenship.

No less difficult than in the field of morals appears to be the adaptation in the financial field to the requirements of money economy. Rural man has to learn how to spend a money income, and he is often learning his lesson under the worst conditions, where minimum necessities so often exceed the weekly income. Here the credit granted and limited by the shopkeeper is a substantial element in domestic finance. The weekly clearing may nearly exhaust weekly wages and thus prevent extravagances. Arrears in house rents

are very common, but the housing shortage enables rackrenters to discount this risk to the full in the ordinary sums asked. However, the shopkeeper and the landlord only grant credits to customers or tenants with an income above a certain minimum. The debts incurred by the latter therefore tend to increase with their income. Thence the pawnshop is an indispensable institution to the poor. Savings, if any, are often laid out on hire-purchase schemes; but fixed periodical payments hardly fit into this system of financing. Hire-purchase therefore frequently breaks down prematurely and subscriptions to newspapers or memberships - if any - show no stability.

On a slightly higher level small shopkeepers and craftsmen know little or nothing about bookkeeping or costprice calculation. They often have to close down because their capital is exhausted.

All the moral and economic shortcomings thus far reviewed may be summarized in the formula that these recently urbanized populations are suffering from a fatal lack of adequate urban behaviour patterns and that the conditions the urban masses are as a rule living in, are very unfavourable to a substantial improvement by their own effort.

In this respect I am now asking your attention for the legal vacuum arising from the fact that customary law ceases to be applicable where customary authorities drop out. In the city fragments of all kinds of customary law-groups are living criss cross together but legal organization is lacking. Intergroup relations are necessarily frequent, intergroup law should be framed to govern them. National or municipal authorities, however, either do not dispense customary law at all or at least they are not empowered to perform all the functions inherent in rural chiefs. Regarding South African cities we have descriptions of confusion and irregularities especially in family relationships. In Belgian Congo judicial authorities in the cités indigènes and centres extracoutumiers try to develop some kind of intertribal law.

It will be clear that there will be far less trouble about the law of property and of contract than about the law of family relationships and of succession, because the former are to a larger extent ruled by the lex loci. It seems interesting to note, therefore, that the difficulties about the latter are of less importance in Islamic countries. It is well known that out of the comprehensive system of religious law, developed by Islam, a few chapters only are as a rule adopted in everyday life, but amongst them the law of marriage stands foremost and the law of succession is second. This does not mean that in Islamic countries customary law in these respects always gives way to religious law - far from it - but the prestige of the latter increases where the former makes default, and thus under urban circumstances in Islamic countries family life is not delivered to chaos. It must be noted that christianization to a certain extent can perform a similar function.

For the major part of his life in the city the individual or at least the family of husband, wife, and children is thrown upon its own resources, economic and moral. Many people intend to go back to their village when they have grown old, and are no longer of value in the labour market. This is an additional reason, next to those mentioned before, why people maintain the relationship with it. The more forward-looking try to appropriate a piece of land for the purpose. But a good number have seen all ties breaking, their relatives die off, and there are many lonely, destitute old persons living in town by the scanty charity and reluctantly proffered aid of their neighbours. Old age is an unsolved problem with the urban poor, because there is no community they belong to.

To modern man corporate action is the indispensable supplement to his individualist way of life. Some archaic forms are brought along from the village. Burial societies meet one of the most pressing needs for co-operation. The remarkable system of collective short-term saving by means of weekly contributions, turned over every week to one of the members of the club, is met with in Johannesburg and in French Congo as well as in Surabaya and undoubtedly in many places between. People will be helpful to their newly immigrated relatives in their search for a job and boarding. They even will call them to the city when they are in need of cheap assistance in their business. They may claim their "gratitude" to be expressed in material gifts from time to time. Again people like to choose their friends from among their kin - however remote - but this rather means the exclusion of others than organized co-operation. Indeed, the system of mutual aid - basic element of rural communal life - cannot survive because the essential factor of local interdependence is lacking.

Neighbours tend to be helpful in the same way and under the same restrictions as prevail in European slums. Religious corporations achieve a good deal, but all this together does not lead to the weaving of a social fabric strong enough sufficiently to protect the individual against the risks of life.

Traditional patterns of social co-operation thus fall short of the requirements of urban life. Modern forms spring up everywhere and every now and then, but their life is fragile. I already had to point out the difficulty as to regular payment of subscriptions. Still more serious and symptomatic for the immaturity of urban life is the lack of firm individuality. Competent and incorruptible leadership is as weak a point as loyalty and perseverance of the followers. Nevertheless labour unions and co-operative societies, however unstable, unexperienced and undisciplined, are in the long run gaining strength and playing their indispensable role in modern life. In Belgian Congo they are promoted but closely supervised by the government.

In precapitalist countries the confrontation with capitalism makes room and creates the need for a parallel of what has been the third estate in Europe. But it does not arise out of an age-long evolution, and for a small part only out of spontaneous adaptation to new but not self-created circumstances. It sprang up mainly by the deliberate introduction of schoolteaching on Western lines. This school system, broadly speaking, had no real function in precapitalist society; it does prepare people for functions in the capitalist sphere, and thus on the one hand dissociates them mentally from the clan or the village, and on the other hand generates a trend to the city as the main place where the newly acquired faculties can be utilized. Insofar as the city constitutes a main enclave of capitalist society in a precapitalist country it is characterized - as compared to capitalist countries - by the concentration of an abnormally high percentage of the educated people. At the same time in such countries the percentage of educated people in this special sense is usually very low. The group as a whole may be contrasted to the urban illiterate masses, but it embraces a large variety ranging from those who passed a few years in the elementary school, up to university graduates.

Although this class is much better off than the labouring masses, its social position is still far from satisfactory. In colonial countries the prevalence of a colour bar - social if not legal - is particularly obnoxious to these people. Everywhere they suffer more or less from the poor social equipment of urban life. Conscious discontent and consequent radicalism usually find their protagonists in this sphere.

It needs no further analysis to see that political desires and modern political life take their origin in this educated class. Nationalism as a positive ideal is and has been within the domain of the third estate all over the world. The rural masses of their own do not look as far as the nation and, when irritated by foreign interference, their xenophobia is at best a forerunner of genuine nationalism.

The city therefore is the domicile of political parties and of the press. It is moreover, as the meeting-place between the politically active class and the proletarian masses, much more fertile than the village, this latter being conservative by the nature of its social outlook, and its traditional organization giving little scope for the politician, whose attitude is essentially individualist. On the contrary urban masses keenly feel their unsatisfactory conditions to which their rural mentality cannot but painfully adapt itself, and they are only too well aware of the social and economic handicaps they are liable to. This makes them easily accessible to political canvassing, however difficult it may be to bring them together in stable organizations.

It is true that the city, in comparison to the rural districts, is usually a centre of educational facilities. I am afraid, however, very few can boast of a comprehensive and - above all - adequate school system. Nor should the school be the end of educational effort. For adult education of course is most badly needed, where maladjustment to the social environment runs highest. Little attention however seems as yet to be paid to the conclusion, which in my opinion with necessity ensues from the facts put before you, that urban populations above all others should be educated to conscious and responsible citizenship. Otherwise they will not join in the silence of the rural masses, but simply be bad and turbulent citizens.

After all that has been said one will easily agree that the problems weighing on public authorities because of the rapid rise of the modern city are serious and manifold. At the root of them all lies poverty, that is the extremely low production per head of the population. As long as the countryside functions as an enormous reservoir of unskilled labour, pouring out into the city and ready to sell itself at any price, I fear the housing problem will always leave an indigestible remainder, especially regarding the floating part of the urban labour force. For the same reason legal standards of minimum wages will be difficult to uphold. Social legislation will meet with equal difficulty as it should be administered to people spending half their life as wage-earners and the other half in the communal village economy.

Another aspect of the general poverty of the urban masses is that many necessary measures in the interest of the good order and the health of the community - building regulations already mentioned, application of nuisance acts, restriction of street hawking and the like - are felt to be burdensome and an unjust oppression of the poor. Here again the rural mentality has difficulty in adapting itself to the urban pattern of life, people not understanding why they should not be free to perform any activity they like within their premises and in the streets. Public administration is not popular with the poor, even where all racial discrimination is absent. One should never forget that there is some justification for such ill-feeling, especially with regard to all kinds of fees imposed and prohibitions interfering with the small business of the lower classes. Public services therefore should constantly consider how modern requirements react on the struggle for life of the many.

Thus the first and foremost problem to be solved is that of production. This however does not imply that in the meantime no social policy should be undertaken. On the contrary it has to perform its part in shaping the conditions for the elevation of production by elevating man.

In recent decennia remarkable progress has been made in the way of city planning and cheap but healthy housing, promoting a wholesome family life. Enormous sums, however, are involved. Attempts to make city improvement schemes selfsupporting are fully justified, but it should again be borne in mind, that apart from the excessive rise of costs caused by the war and post-war conditions, a selfsupporting scheme tends to expell the very poor, and they are bound to be many.

A well-devised city plan, generously equipped with public utilities, including schools, meeting halls, playgrounds, public washhouses, local markets and the like, is of enormous importance to the material and moral wellbeing of the urban community, on condition that it be realized and preserved, what is sometimes not the case. However without such a plan, in which the social viewpoint stands first and the technical second, the urban problem cannot be tackled successfully. Chaos, already abundantly present, will continue to spread, notwithstanding series of ill co-ordinated measures.

This leads up to a few remarks on city organization. In Western countries, where individualism and corporate life are flourishing, many people nevertheless do feel that there should be closer relations between municipal authorities and the citizens than is provided for by the machinery of voting and representation. In the type of city we are surveying, you may find no representation at all, or the franchise may be a very restricted one, but, however extended the franchise, the outstanding feature is, that to the urban masses of rural mentality the activities of the municipality belong to another world, which they do not understand. Their representatives may control municipal authorities on their behalf, but they do not and cannot control the representatives. There should be devised some link between the bulk of the population and municipal authority. In this respect the system of wards, headed by superintendents, as is the case e.g. in Johannesburg may prove useful, especially when the superintendent co-operates with some kind of representation which is really accepted as such. The ward system could be more useful if the ward be an organic entity, envelcping and implementing as much of the daily life of its inhabitants as possible. The city should therefore provide for residential quarters, off the main traffic routes and each equipped as a complete unit with its own shops, schools etc. and a municipal branch office. This office should give the inhabitants of the ward as much service as possible.

In this way something could be attempted to make the isolated individual fit into the social frame, for we found that it is exactly the frame of life that is going to be lost when the villager is settling in town.

This brings us back to the moral problem. The fight against poverty and against moral deterioration coincide. Education, including adult education and welfare work - all of them drawing as much as possible on the active co-operation of those concerned - should provide people with the necessary faculties to survive under urban conditions. The basis of a healthy family life should be laid by wholesome housing conditions and decent wages. This is resuming what I have been saying before. It seems appropriate to add a few remarks on the youth problem. I already pointed out briefly how youth and the education of youth have their fitting place in the social pattern of the village and the clan. In the city there is a yawning blank, showing a criminal generation at the horizon.

It is more easy to sketch what should be done than to decide what can be done by action proceeding from the national and municipal authority. Playgrounds for children will not involve heavy costs. Compulsory elementary education however - if possible free - raises a thorny financial question, the more so if it is meant to fill the gap between infancy and the age of entrance into the labour market. It should be supplemented by religious education on the one hand, and by vocational education and perhaps the apprentice system on the other. Healthy off-time occupation should next be provided for. Young people's libraries are being devoured in Indonesia as well as in the Caribbean parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is probably the same in the world between. Sports, scouting, and educational film demonstrations cannot perhaps be made available for everyone, but even at moderate costs they can be brought within the reach of an important part of the urban youth.

It is time to wind up, but I do not intend to draw conclusions. My aim has been to describe a phenomenon and the problems it presents. I submit that it arises all over the world, wherever the contact between precapitalist and capitalist patterns of society attains a certain degree of intensity. It does show, it is true, some special aspects in colonial countries, but in its main features it imposes itself on national and on colonial government alike. I repeat that I have been compelled to generalize, which of necessity implies a certain degree of inexactness. Moreover I have as much as possible avoided reference to specific difficulties in special countries or to political controversies. At bottom there is always the appalling social phenomenon requiring sociological analysis, which deserves attention, before people proceed to framing and discussing policies.